

to dissipate misapprehensions, which appear to be rife Mother-kin on this subject, it may be well to remind or inform the reader that the ancient and widespread custom of tracing the government and inheriting property through the mother hands alone does not by any means imply that the government of women. of the tribes which observe the custom Is in the hands of women ; in short, It should always be borne in mind that mother-kin does not mean mother-rule. On the contrary, the practice of mother-kin prevails most extensively amongst the lowest savages, with whom woman, Instead of being the ruler of man, is always his drudge and often little better than his slave. Indeed, so far is the system from implying any social superiority of women that it probably took Its rise from what we should regard as their deepest degradation, to wit, from a state of society in which the relations of the sexes were so loose and vague that children could not be fathered on any particular man.¹

When we pass from the purely savage state to that The inheritance higher plane of culture In which the accumulation of pro- property, perty, and especially of landed property, has become a especially powerful Instrument of social and political influence, we property, naturally find that wherever the ancient preference for the

through the mother

female line of descent has been retained, it tends to increase certainly the Importance and enhance the dignity of woman : and her

raise the aggrandizement Is most marked In princely families, where social she either herself holds royal authority

as well as private ^{importance}
property, or at least transmits them
both to her consort or but this
her children. But this social
advance of women has never ^{^^7}
been carried so far as to place men as a
whole in a position can-^{led} so
of political subordination to them.
Even where the system ^{suborcn-}
of mother-kin in regard to descent and
property has pre-^{ate men}
^{politically}
vailed most fully, the actual
government has generally, ^{it to} women.
not Invariably, remained in the hands of
men. Exceptions
have no doubt occurred ; women have
occasionally arisen

¹ Compare E. Stephan ^{and} F. membership implies,
but that they have
(Jraelmer, *Ncit-Mecklenburg* (Berlin, nothing at
all to do with the higher or
igoy), p. 107 note ¹ : ** It is necessary lower
position of women. Rather the
always to repeat emphatically that the opposite
might be affirmed, namely,
terms father-right and mother-right that woman
is generally more highly
indicate simply and solely the group-esteemed in
places where father-right
membership of the individual and the prevails
than in places where mother-
systems of relationship which that right is the
rule."